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Roman Catholic Clergy
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A MANIFEST

Publisht to their

BRETHREN

BY

The General Chapter of the Catholick English Clergy.

IN

Vindication of their Innocency from the false Calumnies laid upon them in a seditious Libel lately publisht by Dr. LEYBURN.

We decree that those who shall be convicted to have charg'd their Brethren with false articles shall not communicate till their death, (as the great Synod formerly ordained) unless they repent with due satisfaction. Conc. Arelat. 2. Can. 24.

ALthough Christian Piety may induce a private man to suffer, without endeavouring to justify his innocency, such scandalous reports and false calumnies as unhappy tongues may throw upon him; yet a Body of men whose profession it is to teach the Divine truths of our Catholick Religion both in belief and manners, and thereby to perswade and carry their Disciples to the blessed state of eternal felicity, ought not permit themselves to ly covered under the dark cloud of injurious slanders, which by blasting their name and reputation might obstruct the desired effects of their sacred functions.

We therefore considering that divers infamous aspersions and

foul Calumnies have been of late cast upon us and our whole Body in a seditious Pamphlet written and publisht by Doctor *Leyburn*, to the great scandal of Religion and to our no less grief then prejudice both at home and abroad; which, as it is unworthy of, so are we unwilling to give it an Answer, least the evidence of truth (consisting chiefly in matters of fact) should too too much exasperate the weak and passionate disposition of one singular man standing in opposition against all his brethren; yet, being he has peremptorily refus'd to give any satisfaction to those whom he has so highly wrong'd, that we might not seem wholy to neglect that duty and justice which we owe to our selves, but principally to the publick good, we finde our selves oblig'd to give this true and sincere Declaration of our innocency to all our Brethren throughout the kingdome; aswel for the better establishment of a perfect peace and union among us, as also to wipe away all mistakes, false conceits, and prejudicate opinions, wherewith the weaker sort of spirits may be imbu'd and poisoned by the too too boldly asserted untruths and maliciously forg'd relations frequently inserted into every leaf of his paper.

First then, because he does seem chiefly to insist on and reproach some *few wanton Clergy men* (such is his ordinary language) with we know not what *novelties and new notions in doctrin*, especially relating to Mr. *Thomas White* alias *Blacklow*, calling them *Blackloists*, we do here all of us to a man profess and declare before God and the world, as we have done several times heretofore by our General and Capitular Acts in the year 1653 and 1657, which are on record in our Registers, that we dislike disapprove and renounce all novelties belonging either to Religion or Government. And particularly, whereas some books written by Mr. *Thomas White* of *Essex* are already prohibited and condemned by the Pope, We, out of our duty and obedience to his Holinesse, do likewise hold them for prohibited and condemned, and do disclaim and disapprove them as such; and therefore, according to our charge and office, we declare to all our Brethren and lay Catholicks of the Kingdome, that none shall or ought read them but those that have leave to read forbidden books.

And

And further, we do from our hearts disclaim, disown, and utterly renounce what ever is contained in the said Mr. *Whites* book entituled *The Grounds of Obedience and Government*, which is any way offensive in the least to his Sacred Majesty, our Soveraign Lord; or ill principl'd in order to his State and Government.

Secondly, whereas Dr. *Leyburn* does calumniate us as being Enemies to our Mother-house the Colledge of *Doway*; We do here all of us religiously profess that we never had the least thought or intention of any such aversion. We have ever lookt upon it as the first and cheif Nurse of such pious Missionaries as must be sent to help and succeed us. Many of us have had our education there, and therefore it were an impossible ingratitude in us not to reverence such a Mother of Martyrs. Hence it was we made a Capitular Act in the year 1657, whereby we engaged our selves and all our Brethren to be diligent sollicitors for the recovery of all pensions, debts or other monyes due unto that house, nor have we ever transfer'd or employ'd to any other end the least gift or benevolence bestowed upon it. Tis true, we have thought fit to reserve within the Kingdome such donations as might be given to be setled in rents for the use of that Colledge, rather then let the principal be transported into a strange Country; which both grave persons of *Doway* Colledge it self have earnestly recommended to us, & we conceive no wise man can disapprove; being that if it should please Gods providence to suffer us to be brought up in our own Nation, what ever monyes were so transmitted and setled under a foraign Prince, would be most certainly lost and confiscate. Besides that Colledge may fall into the hands of others, even Aliens, with whom we should have no power nor commerce.

Thirdly, the Doctor slanders divers of us with disobedience and endeavouring to out our last and worthy Bishop of *Chalcedon*, and to deprive him of his Authority; wherein we need no other justification then to reflect how ridiculous it is to say or imagin it. First, we neither had nor could have any Authority during his life but by him and from him. Secondly, we have laboured by all means possible, both privately and publickly, both by writing and acting, to uphold and maintain his Lordships

power and jurisdiction againſt too too many adverſaries who did oppoſe it; clearly ſeeing, that, unleſs his Lordſhips Authority did ſtand and ſubſiſt, we muſt needs fall to the ground, as being but a Body of his creation. Thirdly, ſuppoſe we had been ſo unworthy and impertinent as to deſire it, who does not know it, was not in our power, nor in the power of any Chapter whatſoever to exauthorize their Biſhop. So farr have wee been from any ſuch intention, as that nothing has been enacted and ordered by us during his Lps life, which we have not ſent to his Lp to be approved and confirmed; nor did we or could we eſteem it valid, till we had his Lps hand and Seal thereto. It is true we have ſued with his expreſs leave and order to get our Chapter confirmed by the Pope; as alſo we have been very wary to ſtand up for his Lordſhips return into *England*, underſtanding that our adverſaries had made it highly diſpleaſing to his then Majeſty and the Court here. With which his Lordſhip was alſo well ſatisfied when he knew the occaſion; his own ſafety being our main motive to do ſo; but we could never have the leaſt thought of depriving his Lp of his Authority, without ſeeking our own deſtruction. We know and have too many evident proofs of it under the Doctor's own hand, that, not finding how to ſatisfy his own ambition, and to rule over us at his will and pleaſure, he had endeavoured from time to time to beget a misintelligence betwixt our Biſhop and us; wherein he ſometimes prevailed for a while by falſe informations; but, ſo ſoon as his Lordſhip came to know the truth, he was alwaies ſatisfied to the full, as ſeveral letters under his own hand yet to be ſeen do clearly teſtifie.

Laſtly, as to the Doctors ſcornful and reviling language, his falſe reproaches, his ſcandalous calumnies, and his injurious untruths, wherewith he labours to brand our Brethren acting here in *London* by order from us; and theſe, both in general and particular; we have taken the pains to examin them all in order as they ly in his pamphlet. And firſt, we muſt needs acknowledge that what our Dean, Secretary, and the reſt of our Brethren here have acted and ordered in our abſence has not only been as impowred and authorized by us with our conſent and approbation, but we likewiſe give them many thanks for the ſingular care and pains

they

they have taken therein; and therefore we look on his ordinary and seditious phrase of a *pack of Blacklowists* as an aspersion thrown upon us all.

The rest of his untruths and calumnies which are too many to relate, whereof he brings no other proof for the most part, but some devout aspiration, or *as 'tis signified to me*, have been canonically and clearly prov'd to be false before us all; partly by letters under his own hand, and partly by juridical Oathes and testimonies of several vertuous Priests, sometimes two, sometimes three, sometimes twenty or more, as appeares on record in the examination of and Answer to all the particulars of his book, inserted together with a Copy of these presents into the Acts and Registers of our Chapter.

One slander in particular we cannot omit, which is that he saith some of us have call'd the virtuous and learned Father *Angelo* Provincial of the *Franciscans* in England, *Madman*; which how false it is, we are confident the Gentleman himself does not doubt; being all of us ready to assure him of it, and of our respect on all occasions to his person and merit. Besides we our selves incurr the same reproach (if due for the reason the Dr. alledges, to wit, the *disclaiming Mr.* Blacklow's *doctrin*,) by this our Declaration.

If the printing and publishing our Encyclical Epistle have perhaps any way been the occasion or cause of the Doctour his scandalous answer (for also heretofore unprovoked by us in the least, he injured our credits in a printed Pamphlet) we are heartily sory for it, being a thing we never intended; nay it was expresly ordered by us it should not be published. Our only aime was to prevent, by sending some private copies of it to our Officers, the dangerous dissensions which the Doctour his factious gathering of hands and other sinister proceedings might possibly produce amongst our Brethren.

Thus much dear Brethren, we have thought fit, nay, we have conceived our selves oblig'd to signifie to you; that, being advertised, you may be the more cautious lest such insolent and turbulent spirits should beget divisions amongst us. You know *Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur*; that all Schism is destructive of Charity, especially amongst Apostolical Missionaries. And

therefore

therefore the Apoſtle admoniſhes us, *Etſi tradidero Corpus meum ita ut ardeam, charitatem autem non habuero, nihil mihi prodeſt.* You know how ſcandalous all diſſenſions muſt needs appear amongſt ſuch as ought to govern and guide their flocks in the path of eternal ſalvation, and that again in the midſt of a Nation overflowed with divers Heterodox opinions. Of which ſcandal as we have been far from giving the leaſt occaſion, ſo (God be bleſt) we can with truth pretend to as great an union (excepting the turbulent endeavours of this one ſingle perſon) as poſſibly any ſo great a community in the Chriſtian world. Of which this General Aſſembly affords a moſt remarkable inſtance; wherein, though near thirty of our eminenteſt Brethren voted and ſubſcribed, gathered from ſeveral Diſtricts in *England* and *Wales*, (and ſo repreſenting the whole body of the Clergy) and the matters debated there were of ſeveral natures, ſome of them relating to divers more particular intereſts under the common, many of them alſo being ſubject to and ſo generally apt to beget (and poſſibly end) in diſpute and controverſie, yet no one point was either left undetermined, or determined with different votes; but all the Chapter men and Officers to a man were univerſally and unanimouſly either affirmative or negative; ſo unparalleld an harmony of mindes & hearts is there in the Catholick Engliſh Chapter and Clergy. And what more becoming a Church, ſince we are not only Chriſts ſeamleſs garment, but even the ſacred limbs and members of Chriſt himſelf; his myſtical Body, whoſe inviolable union the Scriptures and Fathers particularly St. *Paul* and St. *Auſtin*, do ſo dearly recommend to us. We are all children of the ſame Parents, begotten by the ſame Father Jeſus Chriſt, and brought forth by the ſame Mother, his dear Spouſe, the Catholick Church; ſo therefore Chriſt be preacht and Soules be gain'd, let it be all one to us, by whomſoever it is done. Let us ſtill continue linkt unanimouſly in the ſacred bonds of Chriſtian Charity, *Cor unum & anima una, id ipſum ſentientes.* For which we beg you will joyn in your prayers and ſacrifices with us, who are

Your affectionate Brethren
and Servants in Chriſt.

We

We under written Apoſtolical Notaries atteſt that we ſaw the above written Copy ſign'd in the Original by twenty five Officers and Canons of the Engliſh Chapter. In teſtimony whereof we have ſubſcribed and ſet to our ſeals the 17. *of* Sept. 1661.

Robert Chernock Apoſtolical Notary.
Thomas Maſey, Apoſt. Notary.

Concordat cum originali. Ita Teſtor
Gulielmus Byflete *Protonot. Apoſt.*